



CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3065 / TELEPHONE 547-7000

DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ
COUNCIL CHAIR
DISTRICT II
TELEPHONE: (808) 547-7002
FAX: (808) 523-4220
EMAIL: dmdelacruz@co.honolulu.hi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PLAN: PRIORITIES LONG-TERM AND NOW WEBSITE SURVEY

The Honolulu City Council is embarking on a program called PLAN: Priorities Long-term And Now. Councilmembers would like the community's input as they assess which City services are the most vital to taxpayers. This is not a scientific survey. It is one of many tools the Council will use to set priorities for the next budget year and for the years to come.

Attached is a copy of the questionnaire the Council will be distributing to their constituents . This will also be posted as a survey on the City's website, to be answered online. The survey will be available online on December 15th at <http://www.co.honolulu.hi.us/council/>. Click on the City Council Survey link from there.

For further information, contact Kim Ribellia, senior advisor to Council Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, at 547-7002 or Mary Schmidtke, senior advisor to Councilmember Barbara Marshall, at 547-7003.

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PLAN: PRIORITIES LONG-TERM AND NOW WEBSITE SURVEY

The City Council has decided to create a 10-year plan to deliver essential City services in the most efficient, economical manner, while ensuring that Honolulu is one of the greatest cities of the 21st century. The City Council is embarking on a program called PLAN: Priorities Long-term And Now. Councilmembers would like your input as they assess which city services are the most vital to you, the taxpayers. This is not a scientific survey; it will not help to fill out more than one. It is one of many tools the Council will use to set priorities for the next budget year and for the years to come. Thank you for participating.

The deadline to submit this survey is January 15, 2004. Please feel free to return the survey to the Councilmember of your district or fax it to 523-4220 or mail it to 530 South King Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813, attn: Council Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz or Councilmember Barbara Marshall. Indicate your response by drawing a circle around the letter of your choice. One response per question.

1. Currently, most Honolulu homeowners get twice-a-week trash pickup. The cost for this service is underwritten by the real property tax. City officials say the City can no longer afford to provide this twice-a-week service without charging additional fees to the people who use it. Some say charging for a second pickup could create a huge health and safety issue. Others point to Maui, which only collects once a week without seemingly any major bad effect. What do think?
 - a. I support twice-a-week pickup, even if my property taxes go up.
 - b. I am willing to pay for a second pickup
 - c. I do not need a second pickup.
2. The City and County must deal with a growing problem of solid waste. Even though household waste is only one fourth of our total waste, officials believe recycling will substantially aid the City in solving this problem. Are you willing to recycle?
 - a. Yes, I'll recycle if it doesn't cost anything.
 - b. I'll only recycle if the City provides separate containers at no cost.
 - c. I'll pay for a separate container to recycle.
 - d. I won't recycle.
3. City officials several years ago determined that it was better to borrow money to repave roads than to significantly raise property taxes to pay for repaving out of operating funds. This year we are planning to borrow \$30 million to repave roads. Last year the figure was \$8.6 million; three years ago it was \$37.8 million. The administration has been criticized for not repaving enough or fast enough. But there is also grave concern over the amount of money we borrow and the cost in future years to pay those debts. What do you think?
 - a. We should borrow however much we need to get the roads repaved faster.
 - b. We should stop borrowing money to repave roads and just repave those we can afford—even if it means more time between repairs.
 - c. We shouldn't borrow money to repave roads, but we need to repair them more often, even if it means property taxes increase by more than 10% just to repave roads.

4. Some feel the City's parks are essential to our quality of life and our tourism and we should have as many as possible. Others say we have too many to maintain properly and we should consider limiting development of new parks. Right now it costs \$23 million a year to maintain the city's 294 parks. What do you think about overall maintenance?
 - a. Parks are critical to Honolulu. We should continue funding them at the current level, even if my property taxes go up more than 5%.
 - b. Parks are essential but we should consider charging the people who use them to help pay the maintenance costs.
 - c. I don't think the City should consider the parks to be a core service and I think people who use them should pay all the costs of maintaining them.
5. The City pays \$17.3 million for recreation services, which includes such programs as Tiny Tots, senior programs, education (such as botanical gardens), Summer Fun and exercise programs. Some of these programs charge nominal fees, but they are subsidized by taxpayers. How do you feel?
 - a. These programs are needed and the City should continue to subsidize them.
 - b. These programs are great, but the participants should be required to pay more of their costs.
 - c. The City shouldn't be providing these programs as a core service unless participants pay all the costs.
6. The City currently operates 10 Satellite City Halls at a cost of \$3 million this year. Some people use the Satellite City Halls frequently; others never use them. How important are those Satellite City Halls to you?
 - a. They're critical; we should pay whatever it takes to keep them open.
 - b. They're critical, but we should charge fees for some of the services they provide.
 - c. They're nice to have, but we could make do with fewer facilities and/or fewer hours.
 - d. We don't need them at all.
7. The Honolulu City Charter mandates the existence of Neighborhood Boards, operating under a Neighborhood Commission. The 32-board Neighborhood Board System costs an average of \$800,000 a year to operate. How important is the neighborhood system to you?
 - a. Very important; I think it should get more money.
 - b. Not so important, but worth the money we spend.
 - c. Not important at all; we shouldn't spend any money on it.
8. The City spends approximately \$210,000 a year for Brunch on the Beach and approximately \$500,000 annually for Sunset on the Beach/at the Park. Some people don't believe the City should pay for these events. Others say they are wonderful events for tourists and locals alike. What do you think?
 - a. These are great events; the City should continue to do them at least every other week at taxpayer expense.
 - b. These are great events, but the City shouldn't be paying for them.
 - c. The City should pay for them, but not so often.

9. Some other highly visible City programs are criticized for needlessly spending taxpayer dollars, even though many of them individually don't use a significant portion of the tax dollar. Nonetheless, we offer you an opportunity to tell us which programs you think should be eliminated. Please mark any item you think should not be funded by the City.
- a. Honolulu City Lights: \$33,000
 - b. Ethnic festivals: \$30,000
 - c. Hawaii Film Festival: \$15,000
 - d. Ho'olaule'a: \$10,000
 - e. Jazz Festival: \$15,000
 - f. Hawaii Theater: \$90,000
 - g. Kuhio Beach Torchlighting and Hula: \$150,000
 - h. Honolulu Hale cultural performances: \$50,000
10. Some of those programs fall under the Office of Economic Development (OED), which has a total annual budget of about a million dollars. The OED also supports the Office of Waikiki Development, the Small Business Advocates' Office and the Honolulu Film Office. Do you agree the Office of Economic Development provides core services to the people of Honolulu?
- a. Yes, I think the office is worth at least \$1 million a year to taxpayers.
 - b. No, I think we should leave economic development projects up to the state.
 - c. I think some of the functions are important but we don't need to spend that much money for them.
11. The Honolulu Police Department (HPD) annual budget is \$163 million—about 15% of the total City budget. Most people agree that we need to give HPD whatever they need to operate at peak level. Currently the Police Chief determines the priorities for his department. Some people, however, question the resources given for certain functions. Within the police department, what function do you think is the most important?
- a. Traffic control, including speeding.
 - b. Investigation of drug offenses.
 - c. Investigation of illegal gambling.
 - d. The Police Activities League, which provides sports activities for young people.
 - e. Education, like child safety restraints and seat belts.
 - f. Solving property crimes.
 - g. Solving violent crimes.

12. The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) allows the City to borrow money to pay for facilities that will last at least twenty years. In the past decade, the City has begun so many projects that the debt service—the money to pay those loans back—has reached nearly 20% of the City's operating budget. Some CIP projects are mandated by federal or state law or court decisions. Others come by request of communities or the administration. There has been a great deal of criticism about some of the choices made in the past. Please indicate which types of projects you feel your tax dollars should provide.

- a. Only projects that deal with the public health and safety.
- b. Projects that beautify our Island.
- c. Canoe halaus.
- d. Skate Parks.
- e. Swimming pools.
- f. Ballfields.
- g. Neighborhood signs.
- h. Dog Parks.
- i. Recreation centers.
- j. Ball Courts (tennis, basketball, volleyball, etc.).

DEMOGRAPHICS:

It isn't necessary to answer the following questions, but it would be extremely helpful to us. Thank you.

1. YOUR COUNCIL DISTRICT: _____
2. Are you a homeowner?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
3. My annual household income is:
 - i. Under \$30,000
 - ii. \$30,000 to \$60,000
 - iii. \$60,000 to \$90,000
 - iv. More than \$90,000